

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Chinese Communist Prison Camp in Chaot'ung, Yunnan

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1. Between April and December 1950 the Chinese Communists had a prison camp in Chaot'ung, Yunnan. Within the prison compound there were five prisoners' barracks; one contained orientals, possibly Chinese, while the other four contained occidentals, including about two Finns, ten Estonians, one Bulgarian, and fifty-two Russians from the Lake Ladoga area who spoke Finnish. There were sixty to sixty-five men in one of the barracks. Also within the compound were a guard-house and an exercising area for the Russian guards who numbered about twenty-five and were under an army captain. The number of Chinese guards fluctuated from between two or three to fifty, depending upon how many were assigned to the work detail each day. A Chinese civilian was in charge of the camp.
2. The compound was enclosed by two double rows of barbed wire and its one exit was on the south side. About 250 meters apart and at the four corners of the compound were guard towers, each with a spotlight and a mounted machine gun. The southwest tower was occupied by Chinese guards, and the other towers by Russian guards. Each barracks was two stories high. When the barracks were occupied, there was always one guard in the guard room who watched the prisoners through a glass peephole in the wall. At bed-check a second guard entered the prisoners' room to do the checking while a guard remained on watch in the guardroom.
3. To the north of the compound was a single track railroad which ran by the marshaling yards north of Chaot'ung, a town of 200,000 population about one-half mile from the compound. A road ran east and west to the north of the railroad track.
4. The prisoners were awakened at 6 a.m. and transported to work in a bus at 6:15 a.m. At 11 a.m. they were fed their first meal and were permitted to rest until 12 noon, when they began work again. The second meal was at 6 p.m. If the prisoners returned to the compound for this meal, it meant that they had finished work for the day. If they ate at the work area, they still had an additional four to six hours of work; on these occasions they were fed an additional meal before going to bed. Except on nights when the men did extra work, bed check was normally at 9 p.m.

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5. There was no political indoctrination or talks at Chaot'ung, and political instruction on a voluntary basis was not available to the prisoners.
6. The basic meal consisted of Russian cabbage. Occasionally rotten potatoes were added. Periodically, the prisoners were fed small quantities of rice, stale brown bread, water, tea, and soup made from skin and pork bones.
7. There were no holidays, and the men worked seven days a week. There were no women in the camp, although Chinese girls worked along the railroad and on many instances passed small quantities of rice to the prisoners while the guards were not looking. These women were not prisoners, but appeared to be conscripted work details from Chaot'ung.
8. Some of the prisoners usually worked in a railroad warehouse about two miles east of the compound. The principal items transhipped through the warehouse usually consisted of fuel carbon, lumber, some with the Finnish marking, "Enso-Gutzeit,"² and cement sacks possibly from the USSR. Trains carrying these items in varying amounts arrived at the warehouse area daily. Once or twice a week some of the prisoners were used in loading rice on trains possibly going to the USSR, one or two carloads at a time. The prisoners who lived in barracks Numbers 1, 2, and 3 worked in a rock quarry about two to three miles northwest of the compound. If there was much work to be done in the warehouse area, they were added to that detail. The warehouse area was under Chinese guards, who dressed as civilians. Armed uniformed patrols moved along the railroad, checking the warehouse from time to time. A soldiers' canteen was 300 to 400 meters east of the warehouse area.
9. Between April and December 1950 the movement of troops and materiel was mostly East-bound, both on the railroad and the road parallel to the railroad. At times two-engine aircraft and a few four-engine aircraft were in the area. 25X1
There were no jets.

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☐ Troop
Canteen

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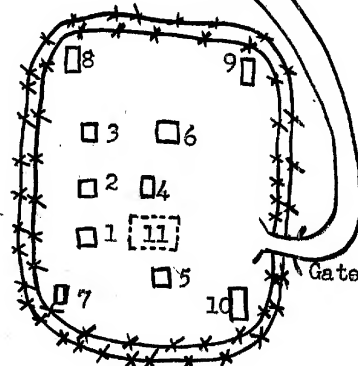
Appendix A

Sketch I: General Layout of Prison Camp at Chaot'ung

Warehouse Area

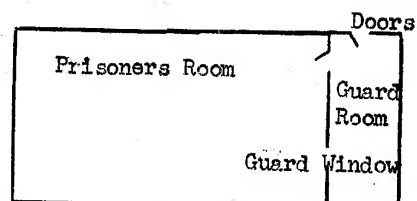
Marshaling Yards

Town
of
Chaot'ung



- 1, 2, 3, 4, Occidental prisoners' barracks
5, Oriental prisoners' barracks
6, Russian guards' barracks
7, 8, 9, Russian guard towers
10, Chinese guard tower
11, Russian play area

Sketch II: Barracks Plan



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